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The Jeffersons in America : a study of the economic, social, and political background of Thomas Jefferson's ancestors

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THE JEFFERSONS IN AMERICA

a study of the
economic, social, and political background
of Thomas Jefferson's ancestors

Henry Snellings, Jr.
University of Richmond
May 15, 1938

JEFFERSON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"The traditon in my father's family was that their ancestor came to this country from Wales, and from near the mountain of Snowdon, the highest in Gr. Br. Inoted once a case from Wales in the law reports where a person of our name was either pl. or def. and one of the same name was Secretary to the Virginia company. These are the only instances in which I have met with the name in that country. I have found it in our early records but the first particular information I have of any ancestors was my grandfather who lived at the place in Chesterfield called Osborne's and ownd, the lands afterwards the glebe of the parish. He had three sons, Thomas, who died young, Field who settled on the waters of the Roanoke and left numerous descendants, and Peter my father, who settled on the lands I still own called Shadwell... He was born Feb. 29, 1707/8, and intermarried 1739. with Jane Randolph, of the age of 19. daur of Isham Randolph one of the seven sons of that name

& family settled at Dungeoness in Goochld. They trace their pedigree far back in England & Scotland, to which let every one ascribe the faith & merit he chooses.*

* Ford, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, I, 1-2.

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PREFACE

Why is it that some men are born and live and die, yet we never hear of them, or even know they exist; and on the other hand, one man, by merely the statement of an idea make his name immortal, and his actions unite a nation behind him and set an example for the world? Most men's graves are neglected and bare, save for the attentions of their loved ones and friends; others become a shrine reverently visited by a whole people.

Such a man was Thomas Jefferson.

Born in a century that looked with favor on the great, the name of Jefferson stands out like a shining star. He appeals not so much to the emotions as a Washington or Lincoln. His work was of a higher order. It has almost entirely an intellectual appeal. He more than any other man of his time enunciated and spread the fundamental ideas

underlying the theory of the infant American government.

"Author of the Declaration of Independence and the Statutes of Virginia for Religious Freedom and Founder of the University of Virginia" would make any man immortal; but this is only the beginning -- president of the United States, Revolutionary governor of Virginia, Secretary of State, author of the "Kentucky Resolutions", leader in revising the new Virginia constitution, and founder of the Democratic-Republican party with its cardinal point the "rights of man".

As the father of the "democratic ideal" he has been a constant and vital force in the development of our government -- sometimes (we might even say often) departed from in practice, he has always been followed in principle. It is really a phenomena, that the ideas of Jefferson have so truly expressed what we like to call "American" that both of our major political parties claim him or his principles for their own. They both appeal, with equal fervor, to the great "Jeffersonian principles" or the "ideals of Jeffersonian democracy".

Why did the God of rain and democratic landslides select Jefferson to carry on this great work? Was it chance, a combination of events, or just pure luck that caused it to be him? Or would he have been great in any time or circumstance?

This question is arousing increasing interest both among psychologists and political scientists -- that of the relative influence and importance of heredity. We chart the pedigree of a horse or dog back for hundreds of years. Their breeding and performance is studied on this basis. Is not just as necessary if we are really to know a man to know his herital environment. But we are not so much interested *in* heredity in this narrow biological sense, but rather in its broader economic and social aspects. As important as the other is, it is something we cannot chart or measure *it* and it is, at present, more or less, an "unknown quantity". The environmental influence, however, is something that we can estimate by a study of their lives.

The forebears of Jefferson on his father's side cannot be traced back as far as

many Virginians, but those he did know gave him an honorable if not an illustrious heritage. And from his mother flowed the blood of English nobility and the leading men of Virginia. What part did this heritage play in the development play in the development of his life -- a natural aristocrat and lover of the arts, he gave his life to the cause of the common man.

Thinking along this general theme, this slight study was begun. And it is only the beginning. The chronological development of the Jeffersons has been sketchily traced. There are many gaps to be filled in and points to be straightened out, due to the loss of many vital and necessary records and the lack of time to trace down others. Enough material was gathered, however, to give a general picture of the "epic of the Jeffersons" and the heritage as it was presented to Thomas Jefferson IV.

There are four THOMAS JEFFERSONS concerned in this story. Many misstatements have been made due to a confusion of the persons. In order to obviate an possibility of confusion, they have been designated by a numerical suffix

whenever there was any chance of ambiguity.

Thus: Thomas Jefferson IV was president.

Peter Jefferson was father of the president.

Thomas Jefferson III was Peter's brother. He died comparatively young.

Thomas Jefferson II was Jefferson IV's grandfather and father of Peter and Thomas III.

Thomas Jefferson I was father of Thomas Jefferson II and the first known Jefferson descendent in America.

The principle sources for this study have been the records of Henrico County, preserved in the Archives of the Virginia State Library, and the Patent Books of the State Land Office. Swem's, Index was invaluable as a guide to sources through the historical publications indexed in it. Most background material was obtained from secondary sources (both contemporary to that period and the present.)

The destruction of the Henrico County Records prior to 1677 has left a gap in this family history that has not yet been filled. It is one of the most interesting of the Jeffersonian geneological problems -- if you are interested in such things.

THE JOHNS -- AND OTHERS

Things are not always as we would have them to be. What a good story it would be if some Jefferson had come over with that first group of adventurous colonists in 1607; had secured a small grant of land and had begun in his humble way to lay the foundations for the Jefferson clan in America! If their steady development from the small group at Jamestown to the Sage of Montecello^{were known}/an interesting story of what we like to call "typically American" could be told. But sad to say, more often than not, history isn't quite so kind to the story-teller. And so it was in the case of the Jeffersons.

But there have been Jeffersons in America since 1618. The earliest mention of one, however, that can be definitely linked with Thomas Jefferson, the president, is in 1676,

when his great-grandfather, also called Thomas, was named executor of the will of Chrisopher¹ Branch (his wife's grandfather).

The tradition, mentioned in Jefferson's "Autobiography" that "his ancestors came to this country from Wales, and from the mountains of Snowden, the highest in Great Britain"², has never been disproven or verified. Due to the loss of the Henrico County records prior to 1677, there is a gap in the Jefferson geneology that has never been filled. It is probable that Thomas Jefferson I was descended from one of the earlier emigrants, and for that reason it is important to know something of them.

The one usually delegated by casual writers to be the paternal ancestor of Jefferson, is John Jefferson, a London merchant who came to the colony about 1618.³ Seating himself in Flower-

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1. Henrico County Records, 1677-92, 219. Probated 1681/2. It was dated, however, 1678.
 2. Paul Leicester Ford, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, I, 3. (Hereafter cited as Ford, Writings.)
 3. Henry Read McIlwaine, Journals of the House of Burgesses of Colonial Virginia, 1619-1658/9, 3. (Hereafter cited as Journals of the Burgesses.) See also Tyler's Historical and Geneological Quarterly, VI, 199. (Hereafter cited as Tyler.)

dieu Hundred, he must have been a substantial citizen, because the following year he was among those elected to the first representative assembly to meet in the infant America.⁴ He must have returned to England sometimes before 1623, because in that year he was appearing before the Quarterly courts of the London Company.⁵ What position he held in relation to the company is not definitely known, but when the King named him to a Commission appointed to investigate the condition of the colony relative to the advisability of revoking the Company's charter, he did not serve. This was probably because he was "friend to the company and their present constitution and government" and realized that the real purpose of the commission was to find grounds for the dissolution of the Company.⁶

Because of his services to the Company, he received a grant of 250 acres, for his

5. John Stith, History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia, 297. (Hereafter cited as Stith, History of Virginia.)

4. Journals of the Burgesses, 1619-1658/9, 3.

6. Stith, History of Virginia, 297.

"personal adventure",⁷ at Archers Hope. As far as is known he never took any further interest in her affairs. In 1625, at the December meeting of the General Court, a conditional grant of his land at Archers Hope was made to a Mr. Utie, because Jefferson was not expected to return to the colony.⁸ A John Jefferson, probably the same one had become interested in the colonization of St. Christophers Island, and had headed an expedition there. He died in England leaving his estate to his brothers, one of whom might have⁹ immigrated to America.

There has recently come to light in England a will of a John Jefferson, proved 1647. From its contents it seems to be that of a comfortably fixed yeoman farmer of¹⁰ hunter. There is nothing in it however to connect him with the Jeffersons in America.

7. Tyler, VI, 199.

8. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, XXIV, 247. (Hereafter cited Va. Mag.)

9. Tyler, VI, 200.

10. Leo Culleton & Lothrop Withington, "Virginia Gleanings in England", Va. Mag. XXIV, 283.

There were one or two John Jeffersons in the colony about 1625 who could have been Thomas Jefferson I's father. One was an indentured blacksmith living in Elizabeth City.¹¹ The following year he had a little trouble with the court when a gun, faultily repaired by him, exploded and injured a man. After testimony as to the damages by the famous Dr. Potts he was ordered to pay "sixteen pounds of good tobacco"¹² damages.

Romance or the call of the "wide open spaces" must have ^{soon} gotten the better of him, for the following spring he, with Capt. Hammer's maid broke the "bonds of servitude" and ran away. Our knowledge of this comes from an entry in the Court records ordering "yt there be A warrant granted to Capt Hamer for the Attachynge of John Jefferson the Smith and Capt Hamers Maide in any Plantation where they may be found."¹³ It would be interesting if we could get the story

11. Tyler, VI, 199.

12. "Minutes of the Council and General Court", Va. Mag., XXIV, 347.

13. Ibid., XXIII, 19.

behind this court order. What if it could be said that Jefferson, the great democrat, had as his first ancestors in America two runaway servants! It is possible.

The court order must have been effective, for in 1626 he was one of the Company¹⁴ tenants distributed among the Council.

John must have either been a family name or a very popular one at that time, for in 1635, a John Jefferson came over with his mother and step-father, George Burtcher. They received a grant of 200 acres in James City County, and in 1637 an additional 200 acres for their "personal adventure"¹⁵

Which, if any, of these Johns might have been the ancestor of the Jeffersons, it is impossible to say. That it might have been one is given slight force by an inscription in the Jefferson family Bible, "This Bible was owned by Thomas Jefferson, of Henrico Co., Va. & Prior to him ownership by Thomas Jefferson, son of John Jefferson, the emigrant of 1612."¹⁶

14. Ibid., XXVII, 148.

15. Extracts in Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers, 25. (Hereafter cited as Nugent.)

16. Owned by Mrs. Fanny Jefferson Casey, of Winston-Salem, N. C. Quoted in Tyler, VII, 119.

This entry, as is obvious from its content, is not contemporary and the sources on which the inscription was based are not known. In the Lin-¹⁷eage Book of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists, the beginning of the Jefferson geneology is given as follows:

John Jefferson m. _____
 d. 1660
 Thomas Jefferson m. Mary Branch
 d. 1687
 Thomas Jefferson m. Mary Field
 (1679-1725)

From what sources the information concerning this John Jefferson was gleaned is not given. Too much blind faith, however, should not be put in it, because other facts given in it are known to be incorrect.

During the period from 1635-1653 several Jeffersons came to Virginia either as indentured servants or free headrights. Among them were Robert Jefferson, who came over in 1635¹⁸ ; James Jefferson in 1638¹⁹ ; William Jefferson in 1650²⁰ ; Alice Jefferson in 1648²¹ ; and Mary Jef-

17. Vol. III, p. 204.

18. Nugent, 116.

19. Ibid., 93.

20. Ibid., 190.

21. Ibid., 154.

22
person in 1653. Little or nothing has been discovered about these last venturers. The fact that they came over as headrights leads one to surmise that they were of a lower station economically. Nevertheless they were largely the people by whom America was made.

But enough time and space devoted to people who may or may not enter into the picture.

22. Ibid., 5. The above data gleaned from headrights listed in land grants.

THOMAS THE FIRST

In the rich lowlands sloping down to the James at Coxendale was a farm owned by Thomas Jefferson.¹ That it was comparatively small is shown by the list of tithables for 1679. A tithable, generally speaking, was the head of the house, any servants or slaves or women who worked in the fields.² With the two tithables credited to him,³ probably not including his wife, he could not have conveniently used over fifty or a hundred acres at the most. But his was among the best in the county,⁴ and besides, it could be had almost for the asking.

He first enters the records as executor and legatee of the will of Christopher Branch, his wife's grandfather. The bequests made to Jefferson indicated the possessions of a hard-working farmer, rather than those of the so-called "landed gentry". The list is interesting:

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1. E. S. H. Greene, The Genesis of Chesterfield County, 68. (Hereafter cited Greene, Chesterfield County.)
 2. Philip A. Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, II, 548-9. (Hereafter cited Bruce, Instit. Hist.)
 3. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 116.
 4. Greene, Chesterfield, 68.

1 cow, 1 calf, 1 steer
 2 barrowes
 1 great pott & 2 pewter dishes
 5 spoons - dripping pans
 1 pewter fflagon, 1 beaker
 1 skinner, berke
 1 pr of andirons, 1 gunn unfixt
 2 sickle and pudding pan

Besides this he was given a four hundred pound hog-shead of tobacco; and also, along with his wife, a slave valued at five hundred pounds of tobacco.⁵

Such an inventory as this, on a larger scale, would probably list Jefferson's complete possessions. He, like the great majority of Virginians at that time, owned a small plot of ground which he farmed himself. This rather than placing him and his confreres in a position of abject submission and poverty, as was often the case with small land owners in other countries. He had his vote, and though he, individually, weilded little influence, either politically or socially, as a class, the small farmer was a force to be reckoned with.⁶ (Witness Bacon's Rebellion.) Aiding this independent feeling was the fact that if a man wasn't too lazy to work he would never go hungry. As Wertenbaker says, "He might be in rags, but there was

5. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 219.

6. Bruce, Social History of Virginia, 101.

no reason why he should feel the pangs of hunger. Seldom in any climate in any age has food existed in such extraordinary variety and such lavish abundance."⁷

If a man is any good, such a society is bound to have an influence on him. Thomas Jefferson must have been ^{supposed} for he seemed to always occupy a respected position. He never received any great signal honor, himself, but he left his son a solid heritage on which to build. Little is known of Thomas Jefferson I. Most of the few scattered facts extant come from the Henrico County records. A spasmodic mention in them is almost our only clue to his career.

Fortunately, he was "surveyor of ye highways" south of the James River and his name appears in the records rather often. From 1679 until his death in 1697, he was often involved in court affairs, either as surveyor or in some private capacity.⁸

In 1679 there was an order for "Thos: Jefferson to pay for two tithables 61 pds of tobo (tobacco)"⁹. He was also ordered to be placed on a special list, along with several others, because ^{he} ~~it~~ had¹⁰ been omitted from previous levies.

⁷ 8. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 1694-1701; 1688-1697.
 9. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 116.
 10. William & Mary Quarterly, Series 1, XXIV, 133.
 7. Wertenbaker, Planters, 101.

Cases brought by Jefferson before the court in his capacity as surveyor are an interesting commentary on the system of road construction, if it could be called such, in the colonial period. Most of the cases brought to the attention of the court were for men who had refused to do their share in clearing the roads. Typical of these is a case brought before the ¹¹ February court, 1683:

Upon the presentment of Tho: Jefferson (one of the surveyors of ye high-ways) to this court made shewing that by reason of ye delinquency of severall persons which in ye precincts appointed him he was forced to leave some of ye high-way appointed him uncleared. This Wrooll Court out of their clemency have ordered that ye said complt be referred to ye next court and if between this and then ye sd delinquents do (without any further notice by ye surveyor) themselves clear according to law that part of ye highway wch by reason of their delinquency still remains uncleared then ye sd complt be dismiss.

12

As is evident by the above and similar indictments, each person in the county was apportioned some section of the highway to clear or some similar work, such as building a bridge. Then, just as today, were found a few who liked to chisel and let the other fellows do the work. In 1683, Jefferson was permitted to run a road around his corn field, provided he did it at his own ex-

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panse.

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11. Henrico County Records, Minute Book, 1677-1692, 159.
 12. Ibid., passim. See also Greene, Chesterfield County, 53.
 13. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 152.

Probably due to his being the county surveyor and consequently often at the Courthouse at Warina, his name begins to appear on juries, as witness to wills, deeds, etc. For example in 1685, he along with several others was appointed to appraise "ye estate of Mr. Tho. Howlett decd & Mr Peter Feild is hereby requested to swear them"¹⁴. He appears often as appraiser or executor of estates, showing the confidence which the justices and his neighbors must have had in him.¹⁵

When Henrico decided to build a town at Warina, Thomas Jefferson was among those buying lots. In the move by the General Assembly in 1690 to develop towns and cities throughout the colonies, it was decreed that a city be established in every county.¹⁶ But not until 1692 did Henrico make any progress in that direction. At the November court that year Thomas Jefferson was granted a half-acre in the new town of Warina for the consideration of 265 pounds of tobacco. If, however, he did not build a house of certain dimensions within four months the grant would be considered invalid.¹⁷

What he was planning to do with this is not known, Is it possible that his tobacco or surveying interests were large enough to warrant a building in the

14. Ibid., 204.

15. Ibid., 1677-1692, 1694-1701, 1690-1694, Passim. Indexed.

16. James J. McDonald, Life in Old Virginia, 123.

17. Henrico County Records, 1677-1692, 370-71.

ambitiously planned town of Varina. Or could it have been a shop for the sale of his leather products. In a partially destroyed passage in the Henrico Records¹⁸ reference is made to

a small parcel of Leather belonging to Thomas Jefferson - seized by the sd sealer for not doing according to the 12th act of Assembly made and...(torn)... Initials an act declaring the duty of tanners & sole makers - Pursuant to the said act the court do appoint Abraham Womack, Edward...(torn)... Henry Hill to try whether the said act or not...(torn)... doe make report that the leather...(torn)... doe make report that the leather...(torn)... aforesd is worth five shillings & noe more.

Was Jefferson conducting trade in leather without a license and charging an unfair price? It would seem that he might have been.

Jefferson seems to have carved a comfortable niche for himself in the life of Chesterfield (or Henrico as it was then) County. Not by any means could he be called important, but he was an honored and respected citizen. As Randall says, "Various social strata interwined between the lowland proprietors and the lowest class of whites. Midway in the scale of a conceded respectability and of a fortune neither large or small stood a man¹⁹ by the name of Thomas Jefferson."

He died in 1697, serving his county to the end²⁰ as surveyor of the highways. His will which was pro-

18. Ibid., 1694-1700, 36.

19. Randall, Life, I, 5.

20. Henrico County Records, 1694-1700, 212.

bated in December of that year has been lost, and consequently a valuable source for a study of his property such as land, slaves, etc. Fortunately, however, an inventory of his personal property was made the following year, probably for the sake of having to divide it according to provisions of the will, Thomas Jefferson II having become twenty one. These household articles which were divided equally among his wife, and two children Mary and Thomas. A note preliminary to the inventory stated that it was "equally divided as by will- except the negroes which were by the testament otherwise by his sd will disposed of."²¹

This shows that he had at least two slaves, and possibly more. However, judging by the remainder of the estate, it very probably was not a large number. His bequests to his widow are typical of the ^{other} two, ²² there being as near equal division as possible:

- 1 feather bed
- 1 rugg & blanket
- 1 sett curtains, vallens, bed cord, etc.
- 1 chest with lock and key
- 1 black leather trunk
- 1 couch with linens
- 1 pair large sheets (canvas)
- 1 canvas pilloweber
- 2 Rusha leather chairs
- 1 great earthern jug
- 5 rush bottom chairs
- 15 lbs of new Pewter
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs of old Pewter
- 1 gallon pott

21. Henrico County Records, 1697-1704, 113.

22. Ibid., 113-14.

8 new plates
 2 old plates
 4 new alchemy spoons
 1 brass candlestick
 1 brass handirons
 1 Birding piece
 1 Crosscut saw, file, etc.
 1 long table
 1 Brass skimmer
 1 Brass kettle
 2 old cases and some bottles
 1 bed pillow and old rug
 1 chest
 8 round quart bottles
 2 pr old sissors
 2 prime doe skins
 2 p'cell old books
 1 ivory comb and brush
 1 small looking glass, 1 burning
 glass, 1 small table
 6 old alchemy spoons
 1 sad (dle) iron, 1 hoe
 1 red cow & small black heifer
 1 old horse, 1 bull, 1 yerling heifer
 1 ox chain
 1 pr pott racks
 1 spitt
 2 iron potts
 2 pr pott hooks
 1 little frying pan
 1 flesh fork
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ stock of hogs
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lumber
 5 barrølls of hopps
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ p'cells of soap
 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ p'cells of salt
 3 tanned hides
 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ busshle of pease
 1 grind stone

Things for a well-equipped Henrico farm but scarcely remenis-
 cent of Berkeley's "Green Springs" or the luxurious town
 houses at Middle Plantations. This more than any other data
 uncovered gives us a picture of the man and the kind of life
 that he lived.

He had three feather beds. That they were not just crude slats of wood to sleep on, is indicated by the set of vallens, curtain, bed cord, etc. that went with them. And a "p'cell of old books" -- if we could know what he read by the flickering light of a tallow candle, we could know almost exactly what kind of man he was; but the mere fact of his having books indicates that he was to a degree, at least, educated. Five barrells of hops and a pair of pot racks are necessaries on almost any farm, large or small. But rather than silver urns and Wedgewood china they had six old alchemy (an alloy of copper used in early days for cooking utensils) and eight new and two old plates. And he had six "Rusha leather" chairs, which were also an indication of his living above the subsistence level. The itemized statement of each article, indicated how highly everything was treasured - such things as we casually throw away - two old cases and some bottles, and then again, eight round quart bottles.

All that is necessary for a comfortable life, but certainly not that of a lordly planter. Wertenbaker's term "sturdy yeoman" would certainly seem to apply to Thomas Jefferson I in the best sense of the word.

THOMAS THE SECOND

As the times in which we are living are different from those which our parents knew; so were they in which Thomas Jefferson Junior had to seek his fortune.

His father, settling on the Western fringe of the colonial frontier, had been a small farmer in a society of small farmers.¹ Indentured servants were brought over to cultivate tobacco, but as soon as they served their time, they could become landowners and voters in their own right. The negro² was a negligible factor and of little consequence.

With the turn of the century, however, a very rapid change began to take place. Planters began to see that the African negro was much cheaper to operate than a British farmer. So their number increased by leaps and bounds. In 1700 there were only 6,000; but by 1708 this had been doubled, and in 1730³ the number had reached 30,000.

"Apparently the Virginia yeoman, the sturdy, independent farmer of the Seventeenth Century, who tilled his little holdings with his own hands, had become an insignificant fac-

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1. Wertenbaker, Planters, 43; Bruce, Social Life, 135-7.
 2. Wertenbaker, Planters, 43.
 3. Ibid., 130-1.

tor in the life of the colony. The glorious promise which the country had held out to him in the first fifty years of its existence had been belied. The Virginia that had formerly been so largely the land of the little farmer had become the land of masters and slaves. For aught there was no room." (4)

How was the son of a small Henrico farmer going to fit into such a society? There were two alternatives -- to settle to the level of sniveling, sub-⁵marginal peasantry or to accumulate land and slaves and become a part of the slave aristocracy.

That he must have chose^v the latter is indicated by the fact that during his life, he held the three highest local political offices his county could offer. (He was captain of militia, justice of peace, and sheriff.) From this and incidental mentions in the court records, we gather that he was a comparatively influential man among his neighbors.

Our first contact with him, on his own, is interesting, rather than important. In 1698, a race was run between his mare Boney and horse Watt, owned by Thomas Hardiman, at the then famous Ware Track at Bermuda⁶ Hundred. With a complicated handicap arrangement and³⁷ other other restrictions, a dispute arose over the results.

4. Ibid., 151.

5. Henrico County Records, 1694-1701, 169.

6. Greene, Chesterfield County, 47.

7. Henrico County Records, 1694-1701, 169.

This is significant only in relation to an incident⁸ recorded in Bruce's Social Life in Virginia, concerning gentlemen and horseracing. It relates that

In 1673, James Bullock, a tailor residing in York County was fined one hundred pounds of tobacco for his almost unprecedented presumption in running his mare in a race belonging to Mr. Mathew Slader for a wager of two thousand pounds of tobacco. The county justices sitting upon the case solemnly announced his act to be contrary to law on the ground that racing horses was a sport for gentlemen alone in which no laboring man might legally take part.

If this was applicable to Henrico at the end of the century, it would seem to at least intimate, that even though not one of the large planter proprietors, he was of good station and entitled to the rights and privileges of a gentleman.

This must have been true, for he was early elected to the captaincy of his local militia troop. Besides having to be able to fight Indians, this was a⁹ position of some social importance. In Jefferson IV's account of his ancestry, he speaks of his grandfather¹⁰ "Capt. Thomas Jefferson". In the records of the county he is spoken of as "Captain" until his death. Whether he was

8. p. 207.

9. Bruce, Instut. Hist., II, 23-28.

10. Ford, Writings, I, 1.

an officer all this time, or in later years had become¹¹
 honorary is not known.

Possibly the popularity and influence gained in this office was instrumental in securing for him his appointment as Justice of Peace. His name first¹² appears in the minutes of the court in 1706. He probably served as justice from that time until his death¹³ in 1731. Though receiving no salary,¹⁴ it was a position of great influence and honor and "the best educated¹⁵ and wealthiest men in the community were selected".

A colonial justice had many more functions to perform than his counterpart today. The justices were the governing body for the county; all judicial, legislative and administrative functions were performed by them in a more or less indiscriminate fashion. An order repair "ye high-way" might be sandwiched in between a regulation concerning the collection of taxes and a judicial decision as to whether or not a Negro John stole two shoates from Thomas Turpin. This great power brought the justices into contact with every phase of county affairs.

The oath which every justice had to take

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- 11. First mentioned as captain: Henrico County Records, 1694-1704, 33.
 - 12. Henrico County Records, 1706-1709, 8
 - 13. Extant records for 1706-09; 1710-14; 1719-24 list him among the justices. It is very probable that he served the periods for which we have no data.
 - 14. Henings, Statutes at Large, III, 508-9; Margaret McMillan, County Courts in Colonial Virginia, 6.
 - 15. McMillan, County Courts, 15.

before accepting his commission is rather interesting for its detailed statement of the principles that had to be followed in the exercise of the power. The oath in effect under the Statutes of 1710 was:

You shall swear that as a justice of the Peace in the County of A in all articles in the Commission to you directed you do equal right to the poor and to the Rich, after your cunning, wit, and power, and according to Law; and you shall not be of the council if any quarrel hang before you; and the issues, fines and amercia-ments that shall happen to be made, and all forfeitures which shall fall before you, you shall cause to be entered, without any conceal-mentor imbezzling, you shall not let for gift, or other causes but well and truly you shall do your office of Justice of Peace, as well as with- in your County Court as without; and you shall not take any fee, gift or gratuity, for anything to be done by virtue of your office; and you shall not direct, or cause to be directed, any warrant (by you to be made) to the parties but you shall direct them to the Sheriff or Bailiff of the Sjad County, or other Queen's officers or ministers; or other indifferent persons to do execution thereof. So help you God.

Probably more than the monthly court meeting, the individual justices came in contact with the people in ^{their} ~~his~~ Magistrate's Court. Minor matters, not im- portant enough to brought before the county court were tried by the individual justice. Records were seldom kept of these and they were usually very informal, being de- cided wherever the litigents happened to meet the squire, as he subsequently came to be called. ¹⁷ Here in dealing

16. Hening, Statutes at Large, III, 508-9.

17. Bruce, Institut. Hist., I, 478-81.

with the ~~trifling~~ trifling everyday disputes, he would come into contact with more people and more intimately than he would at the formal meetings of the monthly court. These everyday relationships with his neighbors probably had as great an influence on his career as any other factor.

His job as justice brought him constantly to the attention of the court as witness to will and deeds,¹⁸ appraiser and executor of estates and similar matters.

In 1713, he was among those ordered "to take the list of tythables in this county... and that the said Thomas Jefferson do also take them in those parts of this county where Gile Webb and John Bolling Gent used to take them".¹⁹ Another time he acted as notary for the appraisal of a Negro belonging to the estate of Benjamin Branch.²⁰ "Two men slaves" of his on being found guilty of the murder of a John Jackson was order to be "hung up by the jaw". They were valued at fifty five pounds of tobacco apiece, which Jefferson was by law entitled to receive for their death.²¹ Richard Grills "of N. C. sells to Thomas Jefferson for 100 £ (pounds) current money of Virginia one mill with the appurtenances."²²

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18. See Henrico Records for this period.
 19. Henrico County Records, 1710-14, 238.
 20. Ibid., 95.
 21. Ibid., 225.
 22. Ibid., 1714-1718, 200.

Justices had a certain dignity to maintain, and Jefferson, as any other good justice was going to see that this was done. In 1714 "Captain Thomas Jefferson complains to this court that Edward Osborn hath very much abused him." The culprit was ordered to appear before the court along with others who had witnessed the disgusting incident.²³ No further disposition of the case is made in the court records, but in such incidents, punishment was more often heavy than light.²⁴

Entries such as these sketch, in a skeleton form, his career. In 1718, the "Governor in Council" nominated Jefferson as sheriff for Henrico County. As such he was charged with the summoning of witnesses, defendants, etc. to court, collector of taxes and at times church revenue, and other ^{court} functions ~~of the court~~.²⁵ As the only administrative officer of the court, he was responsible for the storage and sale of tobacco, collected for taxes.²⁶

By 1720, either through seniority or influence he had become the ranking justice of the Henrico Court.²⁷ Though no official position, this made him actual head of the court,²⁸ which was the highest honor to be attained by its members.

23. Henrico County Records, 1710-1714, 278.

24. McMillan, County Courts, 11.

25. Bruce, Instit. Hist., II, 470-74, 599-600. His nomination made: Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, III, 470

26. McMillan, County Courts, 24; Beverly, History of Virginia, 198.

27. Ibid., 13; Henrico County Records, 1719-1724, 39.

28. McMillan, County Courts, 13.

So much emphasis cannot be placed on Jefferson's political career that his social and economic progress is ignored. Records are ^{even} fewer and far less enlightening in this phase of his life.

For a man to be a man in the Virginia of Jefferson's day he had to have land. So he began early to add to his holdings. In 1699, the Court recorded that "Robert Handcocke Ack convey of 167 Acres of Land unto Mr. Thomas Jefferson, ordered to be recorded." ²⁹ By 1704 he had something over five hundred acres. The Rent Roll of 1704-1705 credits him with having 492 acres, then at the end under a list of ³⁰ "land that been concealed" he had fifteen acres. That same year Governor Nicholson, granted him, with Thomas Harris and Mathew Branch, 628 acres "for the transportation of thirteen ³¹ persons into the colony". The Executive Journals of the Council list a grant to Thomas Jefferson alone for the same amount. This is probably the same as that granted to him, with Harris and Branch, as headrights. It was, however, the ³² second largest; ^{grant in the county} that being to William Byrd for 3664 acres.

In 1718 he was among another group (Thomas Turpin, John Arbilor (?), Robert Ellefson) which was granted

29. Henrico County Records, 1694-1701, 249.

30. Wertenbaker, Planters, 184, 186.

31. Patent Book, # 9 (1695-1706), 302.

32. Vol. II, p. 400-1.

1500 acres for the transportation of eighteen people into the colony.³³ Just what portion of this belonged to this cannot be determined. His other land transactions seem to have been by private purchase or trade.

By 1708 he must have had enough land for his use (or else he needed money), for in that year he sold two hundred acres of his property on Swift Creek to Abraham³⁴ Burton for 10,000 pounds of good merchatable tobacco.

Jefferson must have become interested in the possibilities of the milling industry. With the rich lowlands bordering the James crying for the production of wheat and corn, and the falls of the tributary creeks for waterpower, it was an ideal section for mills. In 1717, Jefferson^{34b} bought one from a Richard Grills of North Carolina, and a half-interest in another.³⁵ We receive our only knowledge that he married twice, in the mention of "my wife Ailce,"³⁶ in the conveyance of two parcels of land in 1721 and 1722. From 1725 to 1727 he made a disposition of several more plots³⁷ of land.

Jefferson must have suffered a serious loss from fire about 1720, for in that year he petitioned the

33. Patent Book, # 10, 1710-1729, 378.

34. Henrico County Records, 1706-1709, 150-1.

34b. Ibid., 1714-1718, 200.

35. Ibid., 175.

36. Ibid., 1719-1724, 116, 276.

37. Ibid., 1725-1737, 9, 105, 149.

Burgesses "setting forth his great loss sustained by ffire and Praying Relief therein was read..." This was referred to the "Committee of Claims" for disposal.³⁸ Their decision is not known.

Thomas Jefferson II's name was perpetuated for the lives of future Chesterfieldians, not by any of his official actions or anything outstanding that he might have done, but by the construction of a small church in 1723, which became known as Jefferson's Church. This was on the site of the first hospital built in America (Fort Malady, a part of the fortifications of Henricopolis).³⁹

From the cold, legal phrases of court records, we can usually get our best picture of a man from his will. So it was with Jefferson:⁴⁰

IMPRIMIS I give unto my son Field Jefferson a Mourning Ring of the value of 20 shillings. I give unto my son Peter Jefferson and to his heirs forever all my land in Fine Creek & ye Manekin Creek but if my said son should die before he be Twenty One years of age, then I give my land aforesaid to be equally divided between my three Daughters, Judith, Mary, and Martha and their heirs for ever, I also give unto my son Peter and to his heirs forever two Negro's Tarding and Pompey, I also give unto my son Peter my Chest and wearing clothes with the cloth and trimming that is in the chest, my cane, Six silver spoons which I bought of Turpin, Two Horses named Norman and Squirrell my trooping arms and Gunn I had of Joseph Wilkinson Two Feather Beds Ruggs & Blankets, the suit of Curtains and val-lains a Diaper table cloth and six Napkins two Iron

38. Journal of the Burgesses, 1712-1726, 293.

39. Stith, History of Virginia, 124; Beverley, History of Virginia, 25; Meade? Historic Virginia Homes and Churches, I, 440.

40. Henrico County Records, 1725-1737, 293.

Potts & hooks, one large, one small, a Brass Kettle

I had of Thomas Edwards the Couch standing in the hall and the Two tables standing there Six leather chairs Half my Stock of Cattle sheep and Hogs, on condition my son Peter live to be 21 years old, but if he die before he arrive to that age then I give the said two Negros and all the things aforementioned to be divided between my two Daughters Mary and Martha and their heirs forever.

I give unto my Daughter Mary a Rush Leather Trunk marked M. F. and six Silver Spoons, Six Leather chairs- I give unto my Daughter Martha a Seal Skin trunk and Six Silver Spoons and her Mother's wearing clothes, Rig Silver Bodkin and thimble Six Leather Chairs I will and direct that my one half part of Gillys Grist Mill, the land I lately bought of George Carter, the land mortgaged by Grills and all the remaining Part of my estate (except my Two negros Jenny and Nanny) to be sold Majr William Kennon & Henry Wood and that Ten pounds of the money (after my just Debts are first paid and discharged) be given unto my Daughter Judith Farrar my Black Walnut Safe & silver Tumbler and Three silver Spoons. I give unto my daughter Martha and to her heirs forever my Negro girl Nanny, I also will that the labour of my Negro Woman Jenny shall be towards the maintaining my said Daughter and that when my said Daughter shall be sixteen years old I will & divide my said Negro Jenny and all her increase to be equally divided between my Daughters Mary and Martha and their heirs forever. I desire my sister Martha Winne (? to take care of my Daughter Martha and I desire Capt. Henry Randolph to take care of my daughter Mary

My will is that if my Daughter Mary or Martha die before they are of age or married that then the several legacies bequeathed be and remain to the survivor of them and if they both die then that everything given them in this will be equally between my son Peter and my Daughter Judith Farrar and their heirs.

My will is that if my son Field or his Heirs shall recover the money I received for those Negros that were hanged that the same be equally paid out of what I have here given my son Peter and two Daughters Mary and Martha. I constitute my son Peter Executor of this my last will Witness my hand and Seal the

15th Day of March 1725.

(Signed) Tho. Jefferson (Seal)

Witnesses

Benja Branch

Henry Moody

At the Court held for Henrico County
the First Monday in April 1731

Peter Jefferson presented this will
upon oath and the Same being proved by
the oaths of the Witnesses thereto it
was therefore admitted to Record.

His son Peter receives the great bulk of
the estate. He is granted the land on Fine Creek and "up
Manekin Creek" which seems to include all of his real es-
tate holdings except the "half part" interest in Gilly's
Mill, which he directed to be sold to pay off his outstand-
ing debts and give his daughters a little "cash tobacco".

Jefferson ll seems to have owned a few
slaves. There were only four mentioned in the will - the
two bequeathed to Peter and the two women to be given to
his daughters , Mary and Martha. Besides these there had
probably been some more. In the will he made provision for
the disposal that was due for "those Negroes that were
hanged.." This would seem to indicate that some of his
slaves had been executed for the commission of some crime,
and as was the law he was to be repaid their value.⁴¹

41. See above p.33.

Other significant items in the will include the silverware which he distributed among his children - six silver spoons to Peter, Mary and Martha; and to Judith, the one married daughter, three silver spoons and a silver tumbler. Just as Thomas I used old alchemy spoons, his son was able to grace his table with silverware. It is one sign of the march upward. After all, though, the captain and "chief" justice of his county couldn't eat out of common kitchen spoons.

There is nothing in the will, however, to indicate a luxurious or ornate home. Fixtures disposed of are all necessary for the home and farm. They are all among the everyday necessities of life; there is nothing that could be said to belong essentially to one of the "idle rich". Thomas Jefferson II, like his father, is a farmer, but a well to do farmer that is honored and respected in his community. Probably not known beyond his county, he was a potent figure there and active in his community or county life.

PETER JEFFERSON

The Virginia Colony was in many respects a minature model of England. Laws, customs and habits of life had been brought over from the Mother Country and adapted to the forests and rivers of America. Virginia, with its frontier lack of style and formality and its abundance of opportunities, was much more democratic than England at the time. Even so, definite class distinctions were maintained and gentleman was a word that meant something. The small planter worked for the day when he, too, might use that title; and once gained he cherished it as much as any former lord.¹ One means of doing this was the system of primogeniture, which² was established by both law and custom.

Peter Jefferson wasn't the oldest son, but possibly because there was plenty of land and Field had already become established, he received the bulk of his father's estate. This gave the young fellow of twenty three a good foundation on which to build. For some reason or other he decided to seek his fortune in the Western stretches of Goochland, now Albemarle County. Even before his fathers death in 1731 he had begun to acquire land there. In 1730 he received a

grant from Governor Gooch of "a certain tract or parcel of land containing three hundred and twenty acres and being on the South side of the James River in Goochland County"³. For this he paid the negligible sum of thirty five shillings. (Land was cheap - the Government was begging for settlers to take up the expanding frontier.) From this time on he additions to his holdings until at the time of his death he was one of the "lesser great"⁴ landowners of Virginia. In the next few years this was followed by grants of 200 acres for 20 shillings in 1733;⁵ 400 acres at the same rate in 1734;⁶ and a thousand acres for five pounds of "good and lawful money" in 1735.⁷

It seems that frontier society has always been conducive to the development of strong friendships. There a man is "thrown on his own" and must develop a sense of self-reliance and self-sufficiency; but this has seemed to make the rare neighbor or friend all the more appreciated. What one had was the others; and the mention of one name would conjure up a picture of the two men working side by

1. Bruce, Social Life in Virginia, 187, 206.

2.

3. Patent Book, # 13 (1725-1730), 495.

4. Counting his Western land speculations.

5. Patent Book, # 15 (1732-35), 59.

6. Ibid., 122.

7. Ibid., # 16 (1735), 60.

side. Peter Jefferson was fortunate enough to have had two such friends - William Randolph, of Tuckahoe, and Joshua Fry, William and Mary professor and fellow surveyor. From the cold, unsentimental entries in the court and land records, it appears rather definitely that these two men played a very important role in his life.

In Randall's interesting life of Jefferson IV, he says that "he (Peter) started his business career as a surveyor, and it was probably in this capacity he first became acquainted with the Randolph family. If so business relations speedily ripened into the most intimate social one, for he soon became the bosom friend of William, the young proprietor of Tuckahoe..."⁸⁷ This is possibly true, but it is much more likely that these two met through the Randolphs of Turkey Island. The Jefferson and Randolph families must have been rather intimate, for on Thomas Jefferson II's death Henry Randolph was asked to serve as guardian for his daughter Mary.⁹ Then, even more than now, a guardian was usually a very close friend or relative. Flat bottomed boats were probably often poled between Osborne's and Turkey Island.

Let that be as it may. Such minor details as how they met will probably never be determined. (And furthermore it does not really matter.)

Typical of this relationship is the story

8. Randall, Life, I, 6.

9. See above p. 35 .

of Peter Jefferson's purchase of the land on which he later built Shadwell. A choice site for a home was owned by his friend William Randolph. But that was of little matter. For the consideration of "Henry Wetherburn biggest bowl of Arrack punch" four hundred acres were conveyed to Peter Jefferson.¹⁰ Henry Wetherburn was the keeper of the famed Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg,¹¹ and the price was probably reminiscent of some good times had under its hospitable roof. In 1736 he also bought a little plot of three acres from his friend.¹²

Soon he carried across the threshold of Shadwell, as his bride, Jane Randolph of Dungeness. Only nineteen and the daughter of the adjutant-general of the colony,¹³ she was quite a prize. But from the anecdotes and stories that have come down to us describing Peter Jefferson, he was probably the kind of man that could win any girl's heart. A quiet, strong man from the woods "many well attested facts and anecdotes show that he was no ordinary man...He was a man of gigantic stature and strength...grave, taciturn... He was one of those calmly and almost self-sufficient men,

10. Tyler, VI, 264.

11. Ibid.

12. Goochland County Deed Book, # 2, 217.

13. Randall, Life, I, 6.

who lean on none - who desire help from none ... But so massively moulded, he had a quieter, a softer side ... his tastes approached to the elegant.¹⁴

For the young wife and her husband the prospects were very bright. Even though "his early education had been neglected ... possessing a strong thirst for knowledge and great energy of character, he subsequently made up for the deficiency by study and reading."¹⁵ Probably from his reading and some county surveyor, he picked up a knowledge of that trade; and along with the universal occupation of all colonists he was master of the "rod and chain". In a country by the square mile to be mapped there is always room for such a man, ^{and} It was in this capacity that he did his most outstanding work. In 1731, when he was only twenty three, he had been appointed a justice for Goochland County.¹⁶ He is credited by Glenn with being sheriff of Goochland when he was only twenty one.¹⁷ This job, held by his father back in Henrico,¹⁸ was one of the most luscious local political plums available, and if Peter had grabbed this in his first voting year, he must have been a remarkable man. Unfortunately, however, Glenn is rather careless with his dates and too much credence cannot be put in his undocumented statements.

14. Randall, Life, I, 140. 15. This flowery picture is based on family tradition and data from people who might have known him as gathered by Randall for his Life.

15. Ibid., 6.

16. Tyler, VI, 264.

17. Some Colonial Mansions and Those who Lived in Them, 241.

18. McMillan, County Courts, 22.

Even if this not be true, by 1737 he was well enough established to secure his appointment to this office. We know this, for in that year his old friend William Randolph and ^{future} father-in-law Isham Randolph went his bond to the extent of a thousand pounds sterling, guaranteeing that he would execute his duties as sheriff "honestly and faithfully".¹⁹

In 1735 Peter was either planning to leave the county for a time or else because his business affairs were coming rather complicated, for he named his friend at Tuckahoe his attorney with all power to act in his stead.²⁰

What with his being the sheriff, justice, surveyor and planter, he became one of the most influential men in his county.²¹ Being the "third or fourth settler"²² to lay his stakes in the red clay soil of Western Goochland, he saw it develop into a full-fledged county in its own right.

In 1744, a group of men meeting at what is now Scottsville declared that the Western part of Goochland was no more Goochland but the County of Albemarle. Among them must have been Peter Jefferson, for he was named one of the first magistrates. Among his colleagues were Joshua Fry, Allen Howard, William Cabell, Joseph Thompson and Thomas Ballou. Jefferson was also on the committee to select a site for the young county's courthouse. The committee's only requirement

19. Goochland County Deed book, # 3 (1737-1742), 58.

20. Ibid., # 2 (1734-1736), 242.

21. Wood, History of Albemarle County, 8.

22. Ford, Writings, I, 3.

was that it should be on the river. This organization of Albemarle County also brought about the inauguration of the long professional friendship of Fry and Jefferson. Fry was appointed county lieutenant with Jefferson as his assistant.²³ They were both appointed surveyors of the infant county. a couple of years later they were together in running the Northern Neck line for Lord Fairfax; together they surveyed a Western portion of the Virginia-Carolina line. They worked together as Lieutenant and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Albemarle militia until Fry's death in 1754. Then Jefferson slipped into the position of his old friend and also took his seat in the Burgesses.²⁴

In running the Western boundary of the Fairfax lands in 1746, the surveyors had to take a veritable army into the wilds of the trans-Blue Ridge for both protection and assistance. There were about forty men with thirty or forty mules and it took them about two months to do the actual survey work.²⁵

At that time Peter Jefferson was living at Tuckahoe, and so, after completing the field work, the commissioners adjourned there to formulate their conclusions and plot the map in more comfortable surroundings. Tuckahoe, one

23. Wood, History of Albemarle County, 19.

24. Fairfax Harrison, "The Northern Neck Maps of 1737-1747", William & Mary Quarterly, Series 2, IV, 15.

25. Wayland, Shenandoah County, 43.

of the oldest James River mansions now standing was about fifteen miles up the river from Richmond. Here the commissioners could do their work and drop down to Richmond for one of Dr. Stith's sermons or a dram or two of grog at Mr. Cooley's Ordinary. After finally becoming ready to chart the map, they found that they had no paper. The little mud center at Richmond had none, and a messenger had to be sent to Williamsburg for a supply ²⁶ ~~of paper~~.

After a month of steady work map and report were completed. The map on being transmitted to England ²⁷ by Governor Gooch, bore the following legend:

A map of the Northern Neck in Virginia according to an actual survey begun in the year MDCCXXXVI and ended in the year MDCCXLVI. Drawn by Peter Jefferson and Robert Brook Surveyors.

Probably the next signal honor to be bestowed on Peter was his appointment, in 1749, along with Fry to survey the Westward extension of the Virginia-Carolina line. ²⁸ It was the experience gained on this trip, along with that of his other surveys and expeditions and surveys in the West that led him to publish in 1751 the first map of Virginia made according to "actual survey". Entitled a "Map of the Inhabited Parts of Virginia", it is classed among

26. Tyler, IV, 114.

27. Fairfax Harrison, "The Northern Neck Maps of 1737-1747", William & Mary Quarterly, Series 2, IV, 10.

28. Ibid., 15.

the great maps of the colonial period. It served as the Virginia portion of Mitchell's Map of the American colonies. ²⁹

The successful complement "Jefferson and Fry" came to an end with Fry's death in the French and Indian campaign of 1754. ³⁰ Jefferson succeeded him both as colonel of the county militia and burgess from Albemarle. Speaking of his becoming military head of his county, Randall says that ³¹ this was

an office always regarded as of the first honor and importance under the colonial government, and particularly so, when, as in the present instance, it confirmed military command over an extensive portion of Indian frontier, and when, we may add, a war for the territorial dominion with the French was regarded as imminent.

He served in this position until his death in 1757. ³²

His career as a Burgess was creditable, but as far as we know, comparatively uneventful and unspectacular. During the period of his incumbency his name in the records of the Burgesses only four times. ³³ This, however, cannot be used as an exact yardstick as to the activities with which he was concerned. Though it does indicate rather conclusively that he played a comparatively minor role.

During his first year he was on a commit-

29. Ibid.

30. Dodd, "George Washington Nationalist", American Historical Review, , 126 1932

31. Randall, Life, I, 12.

32. Ibid.

33. Journals of the Burgesses, 1752-1758. See below p. 45.

tee to which was referred a bill for adding "Part of the County of Albemarle to the County of Bedford".³⁴ This would seem to indicate that he was on the committee concerned with the formation of counties and related matters, or else was named to serve because a portion of Albemarle's Western territory was to be taken. Three days later he was named on a committee to bring in a bill on "petition of sundry Inhabitants of the County of Westmoreland, praying that tobacco plants be reduced, and that this house ascertain how many Plants every person employed in making tobacco may be allowed to plant."³⁵

Probably because of his experience as justice and sheriff, he served on the committee for "Courts of Justice."³⁶ The only other mention of him in the legislative records is an order for payment to him an account for the expenses of the Albemarle militia.³⁷ Rather interestingly, these four entries deal with four sides of Peter Jefferson's many sided career - surveyor, planter, justice, and soldier.

The career just sketched treats only his official or public life. As with most men, that is probably least important. It is his home life and the things he does

34. Ibid., 212.(Oct. 19 1754)

35. Ibid., 214.(Oct. 21, 1754)

36. Ibid., 235.(May 2, 1755)

37. Ibid., 484,(June 2, 1757)

to make a living (if such is necessary) that really tell the story of a man. And even less is known of his private than his public life.

What did he do to make a living? Like nearly everyone else in the county, he was a farmer. It was probably from his estate at Shadwell that he secured the necessities for a comfortable life. But in the days when men had scarcely reached the Blue Ridge and Peter was seeking his fortune, a man's wealth was not counted so much by the amount of tobacco he raised or the number of servants and slaves he had, but by land. Land, land, land was the cry in those days when there was land by the square mile - and could be had almost for the asking. By 1735 Jefferson had been caught in the wake of the surge for land, and began to add to his holdings in Albemarle and to speculate in lands to the West.

Even before he had made his surveying expeditions to ^{the} West, he became interested in its possibilities. The prelude to his first large scale venture in lands [^] occurs in a grant recorded in the records of the Council, ³⁸ meeting August 5, 1737:

Several petitions for leave to take up his majesties land were read and granted as follows, vizt.

To Wm. Randolph, John Horner, William Walker King, Nicholas Merriwether the jun'r, John Cole and Peter Jefferson fifty thousand acres beginning at a place called the crab orchard near the Ridge of the Mountain and running Southwesterly between the

Blue Ridge and the Third Ridge provided the same do not interfere with any former entry.

This was perhaps the beginning of the famous Loyall Company which attempted to open up the Southwest and was the great competitor of the Ohio Company.³⁹

In Albemarle he added rapidly to his holdings and then spread West and South into Cumberland and Bedford Counties. In 1741, he had been granted 150 acres on the South side of the Rivanna.⁴⁰ About 1745 a re-grant of his grant of 1730 was made due to some defect in the original decree.⁴¹ Spreading into Cumberland County he received 528 acres.⁴² Other Albemarle grants included 225 acres,⁴³ another of 400⁴⁴ and his largest 1900 acres received in 1755. This, of course, takes into no account property acquired through purchase and other private means.

In the discussion of Western lands in Harrell's Loyalism in Virginia, he says "Patrick Henry, Hugh Innes, Peter Jefferson, and many lesser ex-soldiers and speculators held unsurveyed claims..."⁴⁵ This was probably referring to his venture with the Loyal Company, which was the most ambitious enterprise in which he was interested. It had been granted 800,000 acres along the Southern edge of Virginia. Associated with him in this venture were many of

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39. Thomas Perkins Abernathy, Western Lands and the American Revolution, 7. (Hereafter cited as Abernathy, Western Lands.)
 40. Patent Book, # 19 (1739-1741), 796.
 41. Ibid., # 25, (1745-1747) 120.
 42. Ibid., # 31 (1751-1755) 11.
 43. Ibid., # 32 (1751-1756) 714.
 44. Ibid., # 34 (1755), 134.
 46. Ibid., # 31 (1751-1755), 318.
 45. p. 13.

his old friends and business associates, such as John Lewis, who was with him when he ran the Fairfax Line, Dr. Thomas Walker, a land specualator who practiced medicine, and his old sidekick, Joshua Fry.⁴⁷

We would probably have many more vital details of these affairs, if the Negro servants at Shadwell had saved the family papers rather than Thoms Jefferson IV's favorite fiddle when the old place burned.⁴⁸ What valuable mine of vital information has been lost will probably never be determined.

The event that is the focal point of this whole story occurred April 23, 1743 at Shadwell. A son was born to Peter and Jane Jefferson and they called his name Thomas. He "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and Man."⁴⁹ When he was two a sad task took him, along with the entire family to Tuckahoe. William Randolph had died and requested "his early friend to assume the executorship and personal charge of his estate and of his only and infant son Thomas Mann Randolph."⁵⁰ Co-executors with Jefferson of the estate were Beverly and Peter Randolph and the Rev. William Stith.⁵¹ All relative and distinguished gentle-

47. Abernathy, Western Lands, 7.

48. Glenn, Some Colonial Mansions and Those Who Lived in Them, 202.

49. Luke II, 52.

50. Va. Mag., XXXII, 395.

51. Ibid.

men, but William Randolph wanted his "early Friend" to take charge of his estate and bring up his "only and infant son". Such a request speaks more than volumes about the man. And moreover, not one pound of tobacco did he receive for this work of love for his friend.⁵²

Here at the old "English School" maintained on the plantation, Thomas Jefferson received his first education.⁵³

While at Tuckahoe, he was elected vestry-man in the St. James Wartham Parish.⁵⁴ This besides showing his affiliation with the established church, was evidence of the position he held in his county both politically and socially. His name first appears in the records in 1747.

What was the home-life of this man who would mould the plastic youth of Thomas Jefferson IV? There are few sources to which we can appeal to secure a picture of this side of the man. First, there is the frankly euphemistic color-story given by Randall. This is valuable because it is based on manuscripts since lost and from conversations with relatives and neighbors who had either known Jefferson or his father. Then there is an inventory of his books. From it we gather that Jefferson was a cultured gentleman, fond of reading the best contemporary literature and works on law

52. Randall, Life, I, 9.

53. Ibid., 12.

54. Va. Mag., IV, 324.

"His mind," says Randall, after discussing his great physical strength, "was of a corresponding texture.His judgements were swift and solid. His neighbors sought his advice; his friends learned to esteem it uneering. His mind once made up, no danger could turn him aside - no obstacles thwart his iron will and calm, but relentless energy."⁵⁵

This is so exactly as we would all like to be and so nearly perfect, that we are sometimes led to wonder if perhaps Randall did not let his enthusiasm run away with him a little. But who can say? It would certainly have been a fine pattern for a son who was ^{To} inaugurate the great democratic movement in the development of America.

From an inventory of his books, we see what he read, for people didn't buy books for table decorations in those days. From them we get an intimation as to what he probably talked about quiet evenings at home with his wife and children. The old saw, "To know a man, know the books he reads" is just as true today as it was a couple of centuries ago. The books in Peter Jefferson's library make him a lawyer, cultured gentleman, and church member. The complete list as found in⁵⁶ the Albemarle County Records follows:

Rapen's History of England (4 vols.)
Solaman's State Trials
Laws of Virginia
Ogilvie's Discription of America
Quarto Bible with Book of Common Prayer
Nelson's Office of a Justice

55. Randall, Life, I, 12.

56. Va. Mag., XXIII, 175.

Scrivener's Guide (2 vols.)
Present State of Great Britain
The London and Country
Trent's Dictionary
A Secret History of Queen Anns Minister
Switzer's Houlander (?)
Virginia Justice
Anson's Voyage Around the World
 A Prayer Book
 three old books
Bishop of Sodor
Man's Instructions for Indians
Spectator (11 vols.)
Tatler (5 vols.)
Guardian (2 vols.)
Addison's Works (3 vols.)
 Map of the Four Quarter of the World
 A Map of the City of London
 A Map of Virginia
 four old maps

From this Randall gets a vivid picture
 57
 of how the evenings were spent at Shadwell:

After wearisome and often stirring events of a day
 of border life were passes, he spent the evening in
 reading historians, essayists and even poets. Addison,
 Swift, and Pope were prime favorites with him - but
 Shakespeare was his great favorite. His well-worn
 and fine old edition of the works is yet extant. This
 speaks volumes concerning the tastes of the man.

Thus the life of an interesting man
 comes to an end. He had lived and was a part of a great
 time. There was an even greater future for his children,
 but in newer fields yet unconquered. One was to affect the
 life of an entire nation. As the "Apostle of Americanism"⁵⁸

57. Randall, Life, I, 14.

58. Subtitle to Gilbert Chinard's Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson was to fashion the mould of a new idea in government. The great champion of the "common man" he, himself, was an aristocrat, used to all of the comforts that wealth and position could offer. That is one heritage that he received from his father. Bruce gives an interesting comparison of their two boyhoods that pictures in a rather dramatic fashion the position of Peter Jefferson at his death and the change that was taking place in the society of Virginia:

The life which Jefferson led as a boy was not that of the son of the modern frontiersman. He was never called upon to split rails like the youthful Lincoln, or to help hew down the super-abundant trees, or to break up the virgin ground with a plow, or to milk cows, or to drive the horses to pasture. Peter Jefferson owned numerous slaves and upon them fell the burdon of carving out a complete homestead in the remote corner of the woods. While Thomas, still a child, was sojourning for a few years at Tuckahoe on the James River with his parents and maternal kinsmen, in the midst of all the refined influences of a beautiful colonial home, the iron muscles of these bondsmen were clearing the ... lowlands and uplands of Shadwell.

THE SUM OF IT ALL

Thomas Jefferson IV came out of the red soil of Albemarle to forge a new society, a new idea in government. Back of him were not the few short years since 1743, but those of three generations which he knew, and countless others unknown. Times when his father returned from surveying trips in the West, the meeting of the Burgesses, or perhaps some particularly stormy session of the county court. Until he was fourteen, these were the things Jefferson ^{knew} and they could not have but positively have affected his thinking. And Peter had the heritage passed down to him of a father taking a leading role in the affairs of his county. Was he not just as certainly influenced by going to court with his father as he looked out for the county highways. And so ad infinitum in the generations past. It was the sum of these experiences that made Jefferson what he was.

The above paragraph, not taken too

literally, is true. We are influenced by our families and the domestic environment in which we live. But just as surely we are influenced both directly and indirectly by the society in which we happen to be thrown. It is for this reason, as much as any other that makes Thomas Jefferson IV's ancestry important. Each of them played a particular role and each was definitely typical of a type in our national development. Each had a priceless heritage that it handed down to be moulded and modified to suit new conditions. It was the product as developed by 1757 that Thomas IV took, and changed and added to to make a ringing revolutionary document that would be the battle-cry for American freedom. It was the product of this heritage - a heritage of life in colonial America - and what he, himself, could add, that was to serve as a model for the development of the infant nation.

Thomas Jefferson I, of Osborne's in Henrico County, was a small farmer in a society composed principally of such men with a scattering of large landed proprietors. But both had an equal vote, if not equal influence. But there was no cowed laboring class as was often the case in a congested industrial society. There was land. Food. And plenty of room. If a man didn't like it, he could

go into the wilderness as a hunter or Indian trader. Such a situation breeds independence - both of thought and action. A dramatic expression of this was seen in the essentially small farmer Bacon's Rebellion - a reaction against the intolerable economic and political situation then existent in Virginia. Things didn't suit them so they did something about it. Possibly Jefferson was among them.

As the frontier began to push Westward and the colonists built brick houses and sent their sons over to Oxford for an education, society began to change. Black African slaves proved profitable and so they were brought over by the shipload to replace the self-liquidating indentured servant. This inevitably wrought a fundamental change in the economic and social set-up. For one thing, it made profitable the large plantation.¹ Whenever a thing proves profitable, it usually soon takes effect. So it was that a society of plantation owners, would-be plantation owners, and those who gave up, began to develop. Jefferson II became one of this middle class - a term which very adequately describes ~~them~~^{him}. On the outer fringe, striving to get ahead - this idea was typical of the small land-owner of 1700.

His success in gaining a place in this social and political life made a change in the man. Now,

1. Wertenbaker, Planters, 157.

more than ever, he knew his rights and stood by them. This spirit was particularly enhanced by his having two or three slaves to do his work for him.² Burnaby, a British traveler³ touring America in 1759, said

The public or political character of the Virginians corresponds with their private one: they are haughty and jealous of their liberties, impatient of restraint and can scarcely bear the thought of being ruled by any superior power. Many of them consider the colonies as independent states, not connected with Great Britain, otherwise than by having the same common King and being bound to her with mutual affection.

Shades of the "War for American Independence"!

Hugh Jones voices this same idea in⁴ his Present State of Virginia (1724):

Though the Violence of neither Whig nor tory reigns there, yet have they parties, for the very best administration must expect to meet with some opposition in all Places; especially where there is a Mixture of People of different Countries concerned, whose Education and Interest may purpose them to Notions and views different from each other.

This sounds very much like an apology for Virginia's catankerousness, or stated in another way, unconventional in thought and action.

As slavery spread as an instrument of labor and the plantation system became more firmly established, the opportunity for the little farmer became less.

2. Ibid., 47.

3. Burnaby, Travels in the American Colonies, 34.

4. p. 47.

Thomas Jefferson II seems to have risen with the tide - a political leader of his county, an owner of slaves and a dealer in land, he was one of the gentry.

It remained for Peter to complete the circle. He became a Burgess, colonel of the Albemarle militia, noted surveyor and speculator in Western lands. But for the rapidly developing slave-aristocracy society in which he lived, he had to rise higher in order to maintain his own.

As master of a large plantation and justice of his county, he had every opportunity to express his political and economic views. "He was," according to Randall, "a staunch Whig (the liberal constitutional party of his day). His leanings as a magistrate were to the popular side. He was up pretending in his equipage and address."⁵ This could just as well been a picture of his son.

One of the Johns (perhaps) and Thomas and Thomas and Peter, and the lives that they lived and the society in which they lived all combined to make Thomas Jefferson, the great democrat.

5. vol. I, p. 14-15.